

HON. FRANCIS J. FRASIER SELECTED FOR 2008 FRANK ROWE KENISON AWARD

CONCORD, NH -- Seventeen letters nominating The Honorable Francis J. Frasier of the Hampton District Court for the 2008 Frank Rowe Kenison Award were received by the New Hampshire Bar Foundation this year. In each and every letter, great admiration for the man and the judge was evident. Michael Donahue of Donahue, Tucker & Ciandella, PLLC, said, “[We] were surprised that Whitey (Judge Frasier) accepted an appointment to the bench, as he had such a successful, lucrative practice, with a state-wide reputation, and seemed to be so suited for the whirlwind of private litigation practice. In hindsight, we all realize that he made a very good choice which has benefited many more people as a result of his commitment to public service. We are all the better for it.” The Frank Rowe Kenison Award recognizes individuals who make “substantial contributions to the betterment of New Hampshire citizens through the administration of justice, the legal profession, or the advancement of legal thought.” Frank Rowe Kenison, Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court from 1952-1977, was an exquisite legal thinker who committed his life to the legal system, education about the law, and the promise of equal justice for all. The Kenison Award will be presented to Judge Frasier at the NH Bar Foundation’s Annual Dinner on May 8, 2008, at C.R. Sparks in Bedford, NH.



Hon. Francis J. Frasier

If ever a man enjoyed his career, it is Judge Frasier. The Judge describes his work, “For twenty-eight years, the people of Hampton have treated me very well, both personally and professionally. The court staff is remarkable, and I have the best clerk – John Clark is just phenomenal. They do a very good job with the public. The defendants conduct themselves appropriately and accept decisions in both civil and criminal cases. The prosecutors are extremely fair and the lawyers are very practical – it’s a great place to be a judge.”

Nominated in 1980 by Governor Hugh Gallen, Frasier accepted the judgeship while on the leading edge of a successful career as an accomplished criminal lawyer and litigator. Since his graduation from Boston College Law School in 1965, he had been in private practice in Exeter with attorneys Henry Shute and David Engel.

Hampton District Court’s part-time judge, Hon. H. Alfred Casassa, was resigning to resume his law practice full-time when Frasier was nominated. “Whether you are a seasoned lawyer or *pro se* litigant, Judge Frasier has the ability and understanding to make you feel good about the process. Most of the matters that come before a district court judge involve a certain amount of emotion and personal rancor. Judge Frasier has dealt with thousands of people and their legal problems with dignity and compassion,” Casassa said in his recent letter of nomination.

Judge Frasier was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, in 1938. His family moved to New Hampshire when he was three or four years old. He fondly remembers the one-room Churchill School that he attended in Brookfield, “There were thirteen kids in eight grades and each of us had a

job to do, including stacking wood in the woodshed and sweeping the floor. In seventh grade, I taught reading to second graders. We had a great teacher, Eva Willey. She set up a hot lunch program by having every student's mothers prepare a hot lunch for all the kids once every two weeks. She started a Christmas program so we would get the things we needed, and she even set up a dental program for the kids."

Francis Frasier graduated from Kennett High School in Conway in 1956 and from the University of NH in 1960. Frasier met NH Supreme Court Chief Justice Frank Rowe Kenison when he attended Kenison's lecture, "How to Practice Law in New Hampshire." For more than thirty years now, Judge Frasier has been teaching that same course at Suffolk Law School. He always passes out an article by Justice Kenison written for the first volume of NH Bar Journal in 1959, saying it is still appropriate today. He recalls Justice Kenison as a "grand man, humorous and pleasant." The NH Supreme Court has always been very strong on judicial education, according to Frasier. "If you worked in a law firm you had to argue cases in front of the Supreme Court. Even if you were young and inexperienced, they always treated you well."

"Judge Frasier takes the bench every morning with enthusiasm, motivation, eagerness and an open mind. His compassion and caring is infectious and drives all of those around him to do what is fair—what is right," says his clerk, John Clark. "His character invades the manner in which he treats every person who appears before him at the bench. Everyone is treated with dignity. Everyone is treated with respect."

"Judge Frasier is an excellent example of how justice is served in New Hampshire. Even when a client loses in his court, they say they feel they were treated fairly," said David Snyder, executive director of the New Hampshire Bar Foundation. "Judge Frasier's administration of justice and the educational role he has assumed with such dignity and compassion from the bench has had a positive and long-term impact in New Hampshire. The Bar Foundation is pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate and thank him with the 2008 Frank Rowe Kenison Award."

The New Hampshire Bar Foundation ranks eighth in annual giving among all 430 New Hampshire foundations. Since 1977, the NH Bar Foundation has provided more than \$20 million in grants to nonprofit organizations serving the civil legal needs of New Hampshire's most vulnerable residents. More information is available online at: www.nhbarfoundation.org.

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